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# Eduplus Ltd. and the brand landscape

A close look at the Finnish education exporting brand landscape

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| <p>This thesis examines the brand of an education company Eduplus Ltd. under the umbrella brand of Finland in IEFE 2013 in Saudi-Arabia, and how it is positioned compared to other education companies. The purpose of this thesis is to find out how Eduplus Ltd. can best leverage the national brand and use it to its advantage in the upcoming exporting events. It also explores the Eduplus Ltd. brand and what strengths and weaknesses it has.</p> <p>The theoretical part takes a look at the general definitions and theories of brands and how they are managed and defined. The theories of brand identity and brand positioning are defined and analysed. It also explores the theories of Anholt and Nebenzahl on Competitive Identity and how it shapes nations. National brands differ from normal brands because they are an umbrella brand for the national companies. Also a peek is taken at the Finnish educational export business and how it is managed right now.</p> <p>Finland has only recently started to take care of its national brand. In 2008 Finland produced a book for building a better Competitive Identity that discussed every branch of Finnish life. This was the first step toward managing a national brand for Finland, and was followed by creating better defined projects like Team Finland and Future Learning Finland. Although this has been a good start, the Finnish national brand is still defined by a few big brands like Nokia and Rovio.</p> <p>Five education organizations were interviewed during IEFE 2013 Exhibition on the subject of brands and Finnish National brand. These organizations included companies, universities and vocational schools. All agreed that there should be better cohesion and synergy between the Finnish companies. Although there was criticism on how the government had managed the delegate to Saudi Arabia, it was still seen as an important venture for all the organizations.</p> <p>The thesis results indicate that small education companies like Eduplus Ltd. should use clusters like Future Learning Finland to start their education exporting. Because Finnish education companies are so small, there is a real need for cooperation and joint ventures. It would be beneficial for all the Finnish exporting companies as well as to the education industry, to cooperate rather than compete.</p> |   |
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of the thesis

The thesis was commissioned by Eduplus Ltd. to make an in-depth analysis of their brand in the IEFE 2013 education exhibition. The author is employed by the company and later became a minority owner in Eduplus Ltd. Eduplus Ltd. gave the main guidelines and points of interest and let the thesis writer focus the thesis scope as he saw fit according to his expertise.

The thesis focuses on the IEFE 2013 exhibition in Saudi Arabia from the viewpoint of Eduplus Ltd, and tries to recognize Eduplus Ltd.'s place in the Finnish education export brand landscape. For a young education company it is vital to understand and recognize the different players in the field of educational exporting and how they interact with the umbrella brand of Finland. To really understand the brand of Eduplus Ltd one has to look both to the other companies and organizations as well as the umbrella brand, and how they interact with each other.

The main research question is:

*Where does Eduplus Ltd position itself under the Finnish brand in Saudi-Arabia?*

In addition, the sub-questions to be addressed are:

*How does the Finnish brand affect Eduplus Ltd?*

*How could Eduplus Ltd best leverage the national brand of Finland?*

*Should Eduplus Ltd compete or cooperate with other Finnish companies?*

The main research question is especially important for Eduplus Ltd because of its impact to future exporting attempts as well as understanding the outcomes of IEFE 2013. It was aimed to study the different relations between Finnish companies in Saudi-Arabia and to contemplate the nature of the Eduplus Ltd. brand.

The sub-questions are also relevant and give more robust understanding of the overall mechanics of the main research question. These sub-questions try to answer the more specific questions about the relations between the "Finland Brand" as well as the relations between other organizations and Eduplus Ltd. They also take a look a bit more to the future and what possibilities there might be.

The thesis first introduces the reader to the theoretical basis on the different aspects of brand and their relations to each other. It looks at the Finnish brand and discusses its roles

with company and organizational brands and then takes a look at the ideas and thoughts of some of those companies present in Saudi-Arabian IEFE 2013 exhibition. Lastly, it discusses Eduplus Ltd.'s brand and its relation to those around it and how those relations could be used to help Eduplus Ltd. to realize its goals more fully.

## 1.2. Research methods

Research method is a systematic collection of data. The purpose is to find an answer to a particular research question and the research questions defines the right research method. (Pervez Ghauri, 2005) A research method can be either quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative research method can be easily turned in to countable form, whereas qualitative research describes real life situations and less tangible phenomenon. Qualitative research is more concerned with opinions and observations of reality that describe places and people in non-controlled situations. (Amaratunga, 2002)

The theoretical basis for the research information was gathered from books, articles and internet. In the main research a qualitative approach was used in the form of interviews. Interviewing was chosen as the method of data collection because of the nature of the research question. It is vital to understand the perceptions of the different organizations when it comes to brands and the Finnish umbrella brand, and qualitative interviews were the best way to collect this data. All in all five representatives of companies were interviewed in Saudi-Arabia and one additional interview was carried out with the CEO of Eduplus Ltd after the exhibition. The companies were chosen to represent the different types of Finnish exhibition organization in the IEFE 2013 and education exporting. The interview questions were based on the preliminary theoretical research and were meant to capture a broader sense of the companies present in IEFE 2013. They varied from simple "who are you?" to more complex "what does "made in Finland" mean?" and tried to touch as many areas of interest as possible. The main theme of these questions was on each company's relationship with the umbrella brand of Finland.

## 1.3. Limitations

The gathering of research data was limited by the settings. Because all of the interviews, sans the one with Eduplus Ltd, were conducted at the actual exhibition there was a time restriction to each interview. This limited the amount of questions and so limited the amount of information that could have been gathered. The interviews were conducted during the last days of the exhibition, but a follow-up interview could have let the interviewees process their stay in Saudi-Arabia more and give more detailed and well thought out answers.

Government officials could have been interviewed to answer some questions regarding the Finnish brand as well as their presence in the IEFE 2013 exhibition. This was attempted but because the booth at the exhibition was managed by the government they were too busy to answer questions at that time.

The author of the thesis is employed by the company and later became a minor owner in Eduplus Ltd. Although this thesis is an objective look at the brand landscape around Eduplus Ltd. in Saudi-Arabia, the closeness of the author to the company can bring in some subjectivity.

The thesis only addresses topics that are directly tied to the main research question. There are a lot of different aspects of branding and brand relations that are not addressed in this thesis due to the scope of the thesis. Although marketing is and can be an important part of branding efforts, very little focus was given to marketing.

## **2. What is a brand?**

Brand is a representation of the core idea of a product or a company. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006, pp. 3-7) It can be a combination of name, symbols, letters, shape, signature, slogan or/and colour that create a unique reference point for the customer. The name of the brand is one of the most important parts of a successful brand, and even if other parts of the brand should change, the name should stay the same. (Clifton, April 1, 2009) A good example of this is the Pepsi brand. Pepsi Co. has existed over a century and has gone through many versions of their logo and colours, but the name has stayed the same.

One way of valuing a brand is with customer relationships and the amount of trust and loyalty a customer is willing to lend to the brand. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29) A brand can be seen as the awareness or reputation of the product or company, something a customer can relate to and recognize. (Kotler, 1999, pp. 602-609) These mental associations should be unique and positive and add perceived value to the net worth of a product or a company. A good example of this is Coca-Cola and Pepsi cola. Even though in blind tests the test subjects prefer Pepsi cola in taste, when asked which product they would choose, the test subjects mostly chose Coca-Cola. (Keller, 1 Feb 2007, pp. 2-9)

Another way of valuing a brand is identifying the financial aspects of a brand through brand equity. A good brand lends its value to the product and increases the amount of money a customer is willing to pay to acquire it. It will also increase the value of the company by increasing the value of intangible assets in the balance sheet. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29)

A brand speaks to the customer about the quality and benefits of the product and helps the customer to make a decision based on those qualities and benefits. With the combination of customer relationship and brand equity, a brand can have an impact and power over the markets. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29) With the rise of mass-media in the 20<sup>th</sup> century brands have become more and more important for companies when trying to increase their overall value. According to Fortune magazine (in 1997, cited in Clifton, April 1, 2009):

"In the twenty-first century, branding ultimately will be the only unique differentiator between companies. Brand equity is now a key asset."

## 2.1. Brief history of brand

Clay pots were some of the first known products to have a brand. The potter who was responsible for the production would imprint his thumb print in to the bottom of the clay pot as a guarantee of his craftsmanship. Some potters would sign their pots with an image of a star or a fish which would work as an early logo. Even in these early days of brands there would be makers of inferior products that would steal the pictures of other potters to add value to their own stock. (Clifton, April 1, 2009) Later kings and queens as well as cardinals and other high officials would have their own symbol or emblem they would use to sign or seal mandates and letters.

The word Brand comes from the Old Norse word *Brandr*, which means to burn. Burning a mark on the livestock served as a way to identify cows from each other if two owners happened to herd their cows to the same pasture. (Interbrand, 1992) Later, when the livestock was taken to the market to be sold, the customers would know what cow came from which owner. This information was used to determine the overall health and value of the cow as it was a reflection of its origin. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29) Good owners with lots of pasture land would get a better price than those with less favourable livestock.

The industrial revolution in 19<sup>th</sup> century really created the modern brand. When machines took over manual labour in producing common household items, the importance of a good



brand became more pronounced. Indeed, some of the best known brands come from this age and have stood the test of time. (Clifton, April 1, 2009) The second boom in branding came in 20<sup>th</sup> century with mass marketing and communication. Now brands can reach to all the corners of the world and cater to an increasingly larger audience.

## 2.2. What forms a brand

As it has been discussed before, brand value is a compilation of perception and perceived monetary value. This explanation does not however define the different aspects of the brand and how it relates to the product or company.

A product is anything that can satisfy a need or a want. This can be anything from oatmeal to mobile phones to an internet service. A brand however is something different. A brand differentiates a product in some way from another product that caters to the same need or want. This difference can affect the quality of the product but might as well be emotional or intangible – Something customers attaches to the product themselves. (Levitt, 1960, pp. 45-56) A brand can create value though non-product or company related means. This is why 80% of the value of Coca-Cola Company comes from its brand. (Swallow, 2010) But a brand is nothing without some tangible product, service or company that it can attach to. A brand is a communicator and a risk reducer in the eyes of the consumer. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29) A good brand can be destroyed by a poor quality product and a poor quality product can be hugely successful with a good brand. An example of this is the “new Coke” where Coca-Cola Company changed the formula of their famous coca cola soft drink with costly consequences. Even though the brand of Coca-Cola was strong it was not strong enough to withstand the change in the taste of the product. (Keller, 1 Feb 2007, pp. 2-9) There was a dissonance between the product and the brand because the customers expected the drink Coca-Cola to be something specific with certain attributes.

The brand is made out of three poles. The first pole is the product, service or company that works as an anchor for the brand. The second pole is the name or logo that is recognizable and visibly differentiates the product from other similar products. The third pole is the concept. The concept is a unique set of tangible (like quality or form) or intangible (feeling or idea) attributes that differentiate and add value to the product. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 7-29) All these three poles have to support each other in order to create a whole and coherent brand. Together they convene the Idea of the product or company to the customer. The customer benefits from getting more information regarding the product and the company benefits by gaining predictability and security of demand for its products. A strong brand cre-

ates a barrier of entry for new companies trying to enter the markets and can secure competitive advantage against existing rivals. (Keller, 1 Feb 2007, pp. 2-9) When the brand managed well both the consumer and the company can benefit from it.

### 3. Brand Identity and positioning

#### 3.1. Brand positioning

Both for companies and for consumers, part of understanding brands is understanding their position related to other brands. Positioning a brand means recognizing the different characteristics and differences of a certain brand. To position a brand in the markets one has to look at the different influences of the market while considering the impact from the consumer's point of view. After all, the consumer makes its choice on the basis of comparison and a successful brand communicates difference and makes its contributions known to the customer. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 152-157) Understanding brand positioning is especially important for marketers who try to increase brand equity. Thoroughly understanding the aspects of a company's own brand and those of others will help to establish what the company wants to say with its brand. A brand does not exist in a vacuum, and finding a proper "location" in the consumers mind means that the company has to take in to account other brands and aspects of the markets. (Keller, 1 Feb 2007, pp. 98-125)

Next two different types of systems of identifying brands position on the market is presented.

##### 3.1.1. Customer-based brand equity

According to Kevin, Lane and Keller, (Keller, 1 Feb 2007, pp. 98-125) there are four points of consideration when examining brand position.

- *Target market*

Understanding the target market is pivotal for successful brand positioning. Market segmentation divides the market in to interest groups that have the same interests and needs. Using these segments as guidelines to determine which aspects of the brand and its image will be used in marketing. The more the company specifies to the explicit needs of one segment the bigger the probability there is that the company will have a larger market share in that segment. This however is a trade-off, if the company specializes too much to a specific segment it will lose market share in the other segments.

- *Competition*

Deciding your target market also decides your competition. Same kind of companies target the same markets and the chosen segment decides where to use their money. This might also mean that your competition doesn't have the same kind of product. Different products can satisfy the same need or want, so it is important not to define the competition too narrowly.

- *Points of parity*

Every company, when designing or repositioning their brand, should look for points of parity with the competition and their brand. If the brand is indistinguishable from the competition or shares a large amount of similarities with the competition it might need repositioning.

- *Points of difference*

A successful brand needs to be distinctly distinguishable from competing brands. Every brand should have a competitive advantage that is communicated through the brand. (Keller, 1 Feb 2007)

### 3.1.2. Brand diamond

J.N. Kapferer gives us an alternative take on identifying brand position. The Brand diamond consists of four dimensions that recognize the distinct characteristics of the brand that appeal to the consumer. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 152-157)

- *The brand for what?*

To understand the brand better it has to answer the question of "for what benefit is the brand." A company has to identify the benefits the brand gives to the consumer and how they relate to other companies in the market. These benefits should be the competitive advantage the company has against competition and should be easily definable.

- *The brand for whom?*

For positioning the brand a company has to find their target market or segment. Understanding the end user and his or her needs and wants are, define the direction the brand should be taken. Changing the target market or segment can have very big consequences on the overall brand.

- *The brand why?*

This aspect inspects the factual basis on why this brand is more preferable for the consumer than competitors. The product or company should have claimed benefits that can be backed up by hard data. These claims can be anything from "no chemicals" to "higher quality." A company should never claim benefits that are not provably present in the product.

- *The brand against whom?*

This question defines the main competitors in the field and so affects the positioning of the brand. A successful brand answers not only who the competition is, but how they can be won.

### 3.2. Brand identity

J. N. Kapferer identifies six separate facets of brand identity that is the identity prism. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012, pp. 158-169) To understand what the brand is better it is important to examine it from every angle, this tool helps in indentifying the weaknesses and strengths of the brand and how it is formed.

- *Physical specificities*

Even though a brand is an idea that a consumer has, it does have to have a physical representation of itself. This can be anything from a cell phone to repair service to a country. Identifying the physical specificities of the product or service is the first step when creating a brand. When investigating the physical representation of brand questions like “what is it?”, “what does it do” and “what is it concretely?” are important, and successfully answering these questions can increase the added value the brand brings. Finding the physical aspect of a brand is easy in the case of consumer products like tinfoil or cars, but can become more problematic when discussing image based brands, companies or even nations. Nevertheless it is important to understand that every brand has a physical representation, be it the company representative or the cultural output of a country.

- *Personality*

Brand personality is about anthropomorphising the brand to appeal more to the general public. This has been the driving force of brand advertising since 1970 and is why so many products use famous celebrities in their commercials. It imbues the brand with human personality traits that the consumer can relate to. Famous examples are Santa Claus and Coca-Cola and Channel No.5 and Brad Pitt. Brand personality is meant to fulfil a psychological function of letting consumers either identifying with it or projecting themselves onto it. Brand personality also sets the tone and style of the advertising and keeps them coherent.

- *Culture*

Brand culture goes deeper than brand personality and attaches an ideology to the brand. The most successful brands in the world sold not only an image but an ideology to go with it with Coca-Cola spreading the American dream and Apple with their “think different”. When brand culture is done right and when it answers to the zeitgeist of its time, the brand will

gather around it a cult following that is hard to convert to other brands. Culture is a powerful tool when harnessed correctly to work for the brand. It takes a stand on something and differentiates itself from all the other generic brands out there. A good example of modern brands with highly visible culture is Google. Google has become to embody new innovation and research and thinking outside the box. In many ways Google has taken the torch carried by Apple and challenged it with its open source solutions and product development that goes outside its main product line.

Brand competition can also be competition of ideologies. Differentiating the brand to answer an untapped ideological need can create more customers than any amount of advertising could do.

- *Relationship*

A brand speaks of relationship. The products and services consumers' use all are in the crux of relationship with people or with things. Dior with its gold plated advertising speaks of grandiose and opulence whereas Ben & Jerry's is about nature and playfulness. Both brands communicate about times shared with likeminded people.

- *Reflection*

Customers use brands to reflect their views and ideas. With consumers choosing brands that they can identify with, like with brand personality and brand culture, a certain brand is chosen to help communicate those ideas to peers. Brands can also be used to communicate to others what they want to be, not who they are. They can be used to build the users own identity rather than by just identifying certain traits about him or her.

For these purposes it is important not only to identify the target market but also identify who or what they want to be. Many brands use this idea of selling the consumer what the user could be rather than tackle a specific problem the consumer has.

- *Self-image*

Every person has a relationship with him or herself. This is an on-going dialogue of who the person is and who the person wants to be. This internal conversation can be a rich source of brand image focus. A person who buys Crystal champagne does not only ask what he or she looks like to others with the product, but also if he or she is the kind of person who would spend \$800 dollars for a bottle of sparkling wine. A Porsche sport car buyer doesn't only buy a car; he buys validation for his view of himself as a fast going and competitive person. He or she now belongs to a special club for likeminded people. "

The different facets of the identity prism, even though here are separated to 6 distinct categories, work together and in practice cannot be changed without it affecting other parts of the brand. Nevertheless, it is important to consider what parts of the brand identity the marketers and brand planners want to highlight. No brand wants an identity that is a bland combination of everything, so it is important to really focus brand efforts when speaking the brand identity to the public. The brand prism is supposed to give tools to understand and direct the brand strategy to wanted direction. It should be a combination of what the brand is wanted to be and how the consumer sees the brand. More often than not these two are not fully compatible and adjustments have to be made.

#### **4. National brand**

A country has to manage its reputation like any company if it wants to stay relevant in today's world. In economically competitive nations it is called national brand, or as Simon Anholt calls it, Competitive Identity. (Clifton, April 1, 2009) These two terms are interchangeable even though Anholt prefers the term Competitive Identity to convey the more wholesome aspects of managing a nation's brand. Competitive Identity is a collection of thoughts and ideas about the country and it is formed, not by heavy marketing campaigns, but by communal actions of its different parties. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006) A responsible government takes it upon itself to manage these different outlets of information about the country and form it to a coherent whole. When the competitive identity is properly managed it can become a powerful tool and a competitive advantage when it comes to competing in the global markets. (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 30 May 2006, pp. 111-133)

##### **4.1. How competitive identity is formed**

According to Anholt, competitive identity is formed by six aspects. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 2007, pp. 25-41)

1. Tourism gives a direct experience on the country. This aspect has the most pull when it comes to national brand as it is the first hand feel for the visitor. Countries tend to have big tourism budgets just for this reason.

2. Brands that come from the country also play a role in forming an idea about it. When consumers know the origin of a product, for example Mercedes (made in Germany), it lends a certain kind of reputation to the country.
3. Policies of the country play a high role in the international politics. Changes in the international or domestic policies are reported often in the international media. Choices with these policies can even mean boycotting or embargoes on the country and its products.
4. Investments from foreign companies or from the country to domestic ones can shape how the country is seen. Recruitments from specific fields or countries can lend credibility and visibility to those fields. Countries are certainly interested in the fields they are investing in.
5. Cultural exports like movies or music build national reputation. USA has almost a monopoly for big blockbuster movies, but if a consumer is interested in small independent films it may look in to the direction of France.
6. The people of the country also shape its reputation. High-profile leaders or other persons of interests have an influence on how the country is perceived.

All these aspects together form the Competitive Identity of the nation with some having more weight than others. The problem is that most of the stakeholders in each category work towards their individual ends and communicate their own image and ideas. For the use of national brand to be effective the effort has to be coordinated so that all of the stakeholders work towards the same goal. (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 30 May 2006, pp. 137-144)

It should be noted though that the government should not do anything for branding purposes only. A well-built Competitive Identity works only if the country and its stakeholders are ready to make the necessary changes according to the image. In the same way as with other brands, if the image of a country does not match up with the reality it can be seen as propaganda. Policy making should be seen as part of the brand building as much as brand building should be part of the policy making. (Clifton, April 1, 2009)

#### 4.2. How national brand differs from ordinary brand

Competitive identity differs from ordinary brands, meaning product or company brands, by sheer scope and depth. Because national brand is so strongly associated with the actions of the citizens of that country, there are ultimately many times more stakeholders with national brand than there are with any other company or product.

Also, Competitive identity is but an umbrella brand for many other products and services that all have their own brands and goals. (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 30 May 2006, pp. 137-144) It even differs from global corporation's brands because some of the brands under the umbrella brand of the nation are polar opposites or hold completely opposite views from each other and the national brand. On top of that democratic and capitalistic nations are not allowed to force a unified image for the country. There is no CEO who can just demand all of the citizens to start behaving in certain way or be fired.

The way nations build their competitive identity is backwards when compared with other brands. Even though reputation is an important part of any brand, product brands mainly spread information about their products through advertising. For product brand their reputation is mainly formed by their advertisements and sales pitches. For a country this is different. A country already has a reputation as something and advertising is usually seen as propaganda. A country has to build its reputation and its competitive identity through other means. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006)

#### 4.3. Sustainability of a national brand

One problem with building a coherent competitive identity is the fact that it is always lagging behind. For example China has a reputation for manufacturing cheap low quality products, even though China has been manufacturing and developing high quality products for over a decade now. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006) Part of the reason is that the consumer changes its mind about a country very slowly. The first impressions made by the country stick and they can be very hard to change.

This can be a blessing or a curse for the stakeholders depending on the country. Italy is well known for high fashion and a strong visual take, even in cars. For the fashion industry this is an indispensable boon, but for a high tech company this might come as a hindering fact. Germany is known for its engineering prowess. Certainly this is something all of their me-



chanical industry uses as advantage when approaching the negotiation tables. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012) However the German entertainment industry suffers of the view of Germans as stoic and humourless. In all cases the opinion of that country was formed decades earlier and was made stronger by the industry that made good use of that reputation. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006)

This is why it is so vital for countries to start thinking about competitive identity early on because some of the effects can be seen years from the time of conception. This can be especially harrowing for developing countries because their past state can be a definitive hindrance for future endeavours. It is also seldom that the image of that country changes because of advertisement or statements for the global press. The only thing that can really change country's image is action. (Clifton, April 1, 2009) Likewise, if the country is keen on keeping the image it has, it has to keep the current policies. Even though it might seem almost impossible to change the image of a national brand, it is completely possible if given the needed recourses. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006) The speed which the change is happening depends wholly to the frequency the country has dialogue with the outside world. A strong presence in international entertainment, politics, economics and/or social values gives a country more ways to spread their competitive identity. (Clifton, April 1, 2009)

Even in stations where, from the brand point of view, catastrophic events have happened, like in Denmark with Mohammed comic, the brand image does not change rapidly in the long run. The National Brand Index (NBI) has recorded big swings in national brand recognition and value with countries like Denmark, but after few years the value has gone back near the pre change figures. Any single event is not going to affect the national brand in a drastic way except if it is a declaration of war or other event that signifies an change in the overall mood and policy marking in that country. (Anholt, Competitive Identity, 13 Nov 2006) The national identities of countries are so stable that almost no country has gained or lost more than 1 percentage point during the four years NBI has been surveyed. (Clifton, April 1, 2009)

#### 4.4. Implementing competitive identity

A successfully managed national brand has to be taken in to account when making national policies. It has to be an integral part of the overall strategy of the nation work in favour of the country and its companies. Many multinational companies see brand management as synonymous with corporate strategy, and this is how countries should see their competitive identity. It has to be part of the everyday lives of the companies and people who further their

own goals and help them reach to them. A well-managed national brand is a usable asset for the nations companies, and when it is properly employed in state and company level for maximum value it can turn in to a competitive advantage. (Clifton, April 1, 2009)

Countries are names with brand power and they can influence the buying habits of consumers. Many companies use the “Made in...” slogan for their products to accentuate the country of origin. It started as mandatory information on the product, but has become an influencing factor in the markets. Made in Germany speaks of certain kind of quality, and even when though it started with production and auto industry, German companies use it from services to educational exports. When it comes to manufacturing, it is hard to compete with German companies both because of their international image and because of the upheld high quality of their manufactured goods. (J.N.Kapferer, 3 Jan 2012) A well-managed National brand works as a positive feedback loop, where the brand and the actions of companies reinforce each other and keep making their reputation stronger.

This is beneficial for the whole country as companies adapt their work and products around the national image making better and higher quality products and the country can invest its money more productively rather than in advertising and propaganda. Building of national image should not be treated as a campaign or a project that has an end, but as a continuous part of the efforts to promote exports and the national economy. (Clifton, April 1, 2009)

## **5. Finnish brand and educational exporting**

In 2009 Finland got wide spread recognition for a good and efficient school system when the PISA-studies were announced the same year. (Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu, 2011) After the success in PISA-studies the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture started a study to map out the possibilities of Finnish universities and educational companies in education exports. This study came out in 2010 on which the Tampere University of applied sciences started their own study in education exports in Finland. These studies mapped out the key countries for Finnish educational firms to start their exporting as well as the strengths and weaknesses of those companies.

Educational exports means selling education services to foreign countries. These services are usually divided into five different sections that are K12 education, second tier education, vocational education, adult education and other education services. These services account for about 3-4 per cent of all service exports in the world and are worth around tens of billions

of Euros. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010) In 2008 education exporting in Finland accounted for around four million euros or 0,25 per cent of the total service exports. The Ministry of Education and Culture plans to increase the amount of education exports significantly in the year 2015.

#### 5.1. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Finland is a small country which brings out specific kinds of strengths and weaknesses. Some of them are due to geopolitical reasons, some of them are because of the political climate of Finland and some of them are due to the size of the population.

- *Strengths*

All of the companies that are in the education business are closely knit with universities, and many of them were university programs before separation to individual entities. (Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu, 2011) Finland does a lot of high quality research in to education and evaluation of teachers. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

- *Weaknesses*

There is a considerable lack of resources and networks for Finnish companies to succeed in the international markets. There are too few companies that are generally young and these companies are not generally well connected even among themselves. There is also considerable lack of knowledge on how to turn these services in to well defined products and this has and could hurt the Finnish education exporting efforts. Finland has only limited amount of teachers to send as expatriates to foreign countries. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

- *Opportunities*

The recent PISA-studies have given considerable credibility to Finnish education system. The global education markets are big enough to include all of the Finnish companies. Many countries are investing heavily in education and are looking for new innovative teaching methods and pedagogical implementation. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

- *Threats*

One of the challenges of Education exports is the fact that the user and the buyer are two different entities. The products sold must be alluring to the buyer and satisfactory to the end users; otherwise a sale or resale is not possible. In some cases there is even a third party, the financier of the project, to be considered when making a sale. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010) Individual Finnish companies are too small to make a difference in the global market and have to work together to be seen. Cooperation can diminish individual possibili-

ties and weaken competition between the companies. (Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu, 2011)

## 5.2. Important exporting countries

There are three areas that are specified to be especially interesting in terms of education exports in the near future by the study done by Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu, 2011).

China has been growing rapidly in the recent years and is growing a considerable middle class in the process. At the moment Finland extends its knowhow in the form of free education which is in odds with the strategy of commercialization of education.

Saudi-Arabia is going to rebuild their education system in the near future, and has planned to use 130 billion dollars for social services like Education. Because of this the gulf area in general is seen as a prime area for educational exports despite the vast cultural differences between the countries.

Russia has been an important export country for Finland for a very long time so Finland has an existing communication lines to Russia. This coupled with the fact that Russia has been investing heavily to foreign education services makes Russia a good candidate as an export country.

## 5.3. Finnish strategies for education exports

Although Education exports at the moment are a small part of the overall service exports it is seen as an important investment by the Finnish government. Education is an important part of the Finnish culture and clearly is one of its strengths. Growing the educational export sector can lead to overall growth of service exports and vice versa. With combining already existing industries with education industry Finland can create new innovations and inventions. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

Educational clusters like Future Learning Finland will be used to interconnect the different companies and universities in the educational business. They will also work as a focusing point for joint offerings and ventures. Using these clusters newcomers can access a network of contacts that could have been inaccessible to them before. These clusters are important to the companies and other organizations because of their individual size. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

Local partners should play a crucial role in accessing these foreign markets. It is important to understand the client, the culture, the language, the infrastructure as well as the local markets in order to make a successful sale. For many of the Finnish companies having a fulltime employee in the country is too expensive and this is how a local partner who has the knowhow can alleviate some of the costs. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010)

Creating a well formed product from the education service should be the first step in every company when considering educational exporting. There has been a lot of interest in Finnish education, but this has not turned in to a buy-decision. Especially universities offer a large quantity of different kinds of services that are not well defined enough to really pique the interest of possible buyers. To survive in the markets Finnish companies and organizations would have to introduce well-defined quality products.

## **6. The Finnish Competitive identity**

Unfortunately Simon Anholt never did a calculation for the value of the Competitive Identity of Finland or at least did not publish them in his website (Anholt, Research Introduction, 2013). The reason for this might largely be that Finland started to take the idea of a Finnish brand seriously only recently, and that the brand capital of Finland has mostly been just Nokia.

Finland did in 2008 tackle the problem of its Competitive Identity with the help of Simon Anholt (Markessinis, 2013) and produced a 365 page report of its mission. The report goes into detail on the strategies of different aspects of Competitive Identity and addresses everything from the financial minister to industrial kitchens. (Country Brand Delegation, 2010) It was made by the official Country Brand Delegation, which was created just for this purpose, but it is doubtful that many people have actually read it. Although there are pointers to everybody in the country, the guidelines are usually two pages long and more prone to hype than to actual constructive examples. The document does not have any legislative power or even power to indicate what direction the politicians are going to take with the Finnish brand. Nonetheless there have been more recent and more detailed plans specific parts of the Finnish industries, and in particular, the Finnish education exports industry.

## 6.1. How Finnish National identity is managed

As said, Finland has been awakening to the fact that it needs a solid brand management plan only recently. The “mission for Finland” document was clearly the first step in trying to understand what kind of actions would a well-managed national brand need. The Finnish government looked more closely at the exports of Finland and how it could help Finnish businesses to expand more effectively. This started two initiatives that worked as cooperation between the governmental agencies and private entities. These two initiatives are Team Finland and Future Learning Finland.

### 6.1.1. Team Finland

Team Finland is based on the 2011 government program and its job is to promote the Finnish export companies abroad. Governmental agencies realized that Finnish companies have to rely more and more to exports in order to stay profitable, and that they needed help in creating contacts in those countries. Even though Team Finland is a governmental entity, it is cooperation between the public and private sector to secure new markets for Finnish companies. (Team Finland, 2013)

Team Finland's Figurehead has been Alexander Stubb, who is the Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade of Finland. He has been very visible with Team Finland and touring the world in current and/or possible future exporting countries taking a delegate of Finnish companies with him.

Team Finland is still too young to draw conclusions on its merits, but it has already faced criticism towards its working practices. One example has been the IEFE 2013 Exhibition and its participants who got minimal support from the governmental agencies even though it was deemed one of the best opportunities for Finnish Education exporters. (Jaskari, 2013)

### 6.1.2. Future Learning Finland

Future Learning Finland (FLF) is part of Finnpro, a consulting firm that is partly owned by the public and partly owned by private owners. Future Learning Finland was launched in May 2011 and consists of over 70 members. Its main goals are providing its individual partners the benefit of pooled resources and better communication lines between countries.

The members of Future Learning Finland span from Universities to teacher management program providers to content providers like Sanoma Group. (Future Learning Finland, 2013)

Although FLF is mainly concerned with efforts of exports and better communication between the countries, it also tries to find meaningful alliances and cooperation possibilities within its ranks. With most of the organizations inside FLF being small to middle size, there are considerable advantages in Teaming up with other companies and to start joint ventures whenever possible. Future Learning Finland tries to find the best companies for specific markets and contacts that then showcase their knowledge and product offering.

The Finnish delegation to IEFE 2013 exhibition was organized by FLF in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Culture. Although any member company could come to the exhibition, the participants to private meets between Finnish organizations and the governmental agencies of Saudi-Arabia were selected by FLF. This was done to ensure that the conversation stayed on topic and each participant could have an allotted amount of time to talk about their own products, rather than compete with 15 or more participants for the time.

For small companies like Eduplus Ltd. these kinds of privileged private meets with the officials of another government would have been impossible without the Future Learning Finland. Although the government doesn't really give out monetary aid for small to middle sized companies when it comes to just exporting purposes, these kinds of contacts are hard to manage without someone who already knows the customs and people of the country. Future Learning Finland has already become a valuable asset for Eduplus Ltd. that helps to size up the market and converse with other companies in it.

## 6.2. Finnish brand in Saudi Arabia

Although Finland is not very well known in Saudi-Arabia, Finnish education has been a point of interest for the Saudis for some time now. Saudi-Arabia has been interested in turning their country into a knowledge based society, and has been looking at different countries for different kinds of education systems. (Ramady, 2010) Finland's surprisingly fast transformation from the 1970's when Finland was classified as the least successful European country in the field of Education to its present state at the top of all education rankings in the world has peaked the interest of many emerging nations. (TAGO, 2013) With Saudis having a similar transformation in mind, it has identified few of the key countries that could help it to achieve this change.

The Saudi-Arabian government had requested Pearson to do a study of the best educational systems that could be imported to Saudi-Arabia. Pearson identified South-Korea and Fin-



land, both of which have now served as guest countries in the last consecutive IEFE exhibitions, to be most suitable. With the merits of the Finnish educational system as well as the recommendation of Pearson, Finland was chosen as one of the guest countries in the upcoming IEFE exhibition.

Finland had also started a traditional Finnish school in 2011 in Jeddah with the help of Edu-Cluster Finland Ltd. The Jeddah School, with others like it around the Middle-east, work as a test schools for the Finnish school system. The schools have made a positive impact to the reputation of Finnish education and have made Finland more known throughout the Middle East. (AL-JASSEM, 2011)

From a Finnish export and brand point of view this can open new more lucrative possibilities. Saudi-Arabia and the Middle East region have been recognized as one of the top possible education export countries and region respectively. Saudi-Arabia is investing SR 204 billion in education in the 2013 budget and looking for possible service providers. With the good reputation of Finnish education system, the test schools in the region and being the guest country in the IEFE 2013 exhibition, Finnish companies have better possibilities of creating long lasting partner and client relationships with Saudi-Arabians than ever before.

Small companies like Eduplus Ltd. that have not yet built a reputation outside Finland should use the Finnish brand as a mark of quality and trust. Especially in the exhibition where the education providers of Saudi-Arabia will be looking for new innovative ideas, the mentioning of Finnish excellence in Education can open up lines of communication that were not present before. With correctly leveraged Finnish Competitive Identity and the organizations own brand any company visiting Saudi-Arabia at this time should be able to achieve their goals for the exhibition.

### 6.3. PISA and other results

Finland has had much international success when it comes to comparisons between educational systems. The program for international student assessment (PISA) has ranked the Finnish students first in the scientific literacy and second both in Reading literacy as well as Mathematical literacy. (Ministry of education and culture, 2009) This ranking as one of the best education systems has sparked much international debate over why the Finnish system of education is so successful and also given Finland more publicity in the global media.



Pearson too has made their own research on to the education systems of different nations. With its recent study of 2012 it found out that the current “education superpowers” are Finland and South Korea. Even though Finland and South Korea have very different types of education systems they both excel at educating the teachers of students. The study made by Pearson pairs these similarities between the top nations to give any government interested in increasing their educational output pointers on how to improve their system. (Pearson, 2012)

## **7. Finnish education export companies and the IEFE 2013 exhibition**

A delegate of 70 people from different organizations and companies attended the IEFE 2013 exhibition in Riyadh. A good portion of those were people who came to Saudi-Arabia for the sole purpose to sell or exhibit their products and services. There were members from Universities, like from the Universities of Turku, Lappeenranta and Jyväskylä, members from companies, like Eduplus Ltd., Rediteq and Dramaforum and from public organizations like the ministry of education and commerce. Together they formed the Finnish booth in the Exhibition. The booth at IEFE 2013 was divided to two compartments. One side was for the Governmental organizations and the other side was for the organizations that were actually selling a product or a service.

Of all of the Finnish companies present at IEFE 2013, five were interviewed for this thesis. These were companies that had products or services relevant for Eduplus Ltd. or products similar to Eduplus Ltd.’s products. They represent their segment of similar products or organizations. For example there were many Finnish universities present at IEFE 2013, but the University of Lappeenranta was interviewed. There were also other educational game companies, like 10Monkeys.com or Moovit, but Dramaforum was interviewed. This was done because of the time constraints at the exhibition.

Because brands do not live in a vacuum, it is important to understand how other companies see themselves and their relation to each other and the Finnish brand. The questions were formed to reflect this as well as the underlying theory of brand and branding. Many of the questions also handle their relations with the brand of Finland as well as how the umbrella brand was managed or should be managed. To understand where Eduplus Ltd. really fits inside the umbrella brand of Finland it has to first establish where the other companies are in relation to it. After this information of the brand landscape at IEFE 2013 is mapped out, it is finally possible to start looking at Eduplus Ltd.’s own brand.

This chapter examines the motivations and opinions of the five different Finnish organizations interviewed. The organizations are divided into two categories, commercial companies and educational organizations. This was done because the similarities between these two segments made it easier to compare their views. For full interviews with the organizations, see appendixes 2-9.

### 7.1. IEFE 2013 Exhibition

IEFE exhibition is the biggest Education exhibition in the Middle East and it is hosted by Saudi-Arabia. The event is important not only in Saudi-Arabia but in the neighbouring countries as well and had a turn up of over 40 000 people in the year 2012.

IEFE 2013 was the third time the IEFE exhibition with Finland as its guest country. Finland was chosen by a study made by Pearson, that found out that Finland has one of the best education systems in the world. The guest country of the previous year, South-Korea was also recommended by Pearson.

The gulf area as well as Saudi-Arabia specifically has been chosen to be the area of interest for education exporting companies by the Finnish government. The building of the Finnish Booth in IEFE 2013 was spearheaded by the Ministry of education and culture together with the education exporting cluster Future Learning Finland. (IEFE)

### 7.2. Companies

Dramaforum was founded in 2002 and provides a product called Petra's planet. They focus on delivering a safe and inquisitive learning environment for students of different ages.

Rediteq was established in 1991 to answer the need for better learning management systems. During its 20 year life Rediteq has cornered the market for apprenticeship management programs in Finland and now has 90% of the market. Lately Rediteq has been broadening their product catalogue offering solutions to schools as well as vocational schools.

Although both are in the field of education neither of them could be directly seen as competition for Eduplus Ltd. Rediteq with its management product is more like a possible distributor or a client. Dramaforum has more resemblance as a competition for Eduplus Ltd. but their product the Petra's planet is very different and is more of a platform than an education game. 10Monkeys.Com, a Finnish company that makes educational mathematics games,

was also present at the exhibition. Their product offering is closer to that of Eduplus Ltd. especially when Eduplus Ltd. showcased their newest product Crosswinds, which is a mathematics game.

#### 7.2.1. Goals

Both Rediteq and Dramaforum came to the IEFE 2013 exhibition to find possible clients and contacts. (Rajatora, 2013) Among these possible contacts were the major e-learning providers of Saudi-Arabia, National centre for E-learning and Tatweer. Rediteq also mentions that they are there to represent themselves. (Langille, 2013) This could be interpreted as just showing themselves to the Saudi market, or as representing themselves to other Finnish companies. Dramaforum also says that they are there to meet other Finnish companies. These goals concerning other Finnish companies coincide with their responses for needing to work together with companies under the Finnish brand. It is clearly important for small companies like these, and Eduplus Ltd., to be seen and converse with others in the field.

#### 7.2.2. Brand relation with Finnish National Identity

Questions about national brand yielded varied answers. Rediteq was not too concerned by Finnish brand and felt that their product was more technology focused than Finnish focused. They felt that The Finnish education system was more linked to the overall brand of Finland. Dramaforum agreed on this saying that National brand was especially important for educational sector. Dramaforum also said that they used the Finnish brand as a country with the world's best education a lot for their own benefit.

When asked about the slogan "made in Finland" Rediteq felt that it told more about reliability and trust whereas Dramaforum thought that it was more about Quality and design. These two notions, trust and quality, come up a lot when discussing Finnish national brand, and is clearly an integral part of the brand, at least from the Finnish point of view.

Both agreed that Finland would benefit from a more robust national brand and that the brand should be more unified among different markets. These ideas works well with the idea of Competitive identity and those different fields should work together forming a coherent whole. Especially the education field should start working closer together as unit rather than as separate companies. Many expressed the concern that all of the companies in the field were too small to have an impact, and that there should be more sharing of resources as well as contacts. This could be coordinated by the government, but both companies expressed apprehension to the idea and felt that some private company could take the lead. Dramaforum even expressed the need for better and boulder marketing to make the Finnish

companies more visible in the global market. Future Learning Finland has taken steps to start such campaigns, and both felt that FLF was an important for their company now and in the future.

Rediteq saw their own brand as a fit on the later stages of the educational system. Their views were consistent with the specifics of their product and no further elaboration on the nature of the brand was given. Same with Dramaforum, they described their brand as learning environment and platform provider but did not go in to details on the brand per se. This was common among all the participants interviewed as well as among the people in charge of Competitive identity of Finland. Brand is seen as a function rather than something that has a strong emotional connection.

### 7.3. Educational organizations

Omnia is a vocational training school with over 10 000 students and a staff of 700 people. Omnia is the only vocational school in Finland who actively offers their services to international markets.

Lappeenranta University of Technology is a Finnish university that also sells teacher training services internationally. In addition to teacher training services, the Lappeenranta University of Technology is involved in research and development of different fields.

KiVa Anti bullying program is a program started by the University of Turku and gets funding from Ministry of Education and Culture. The program has been scientifically proven to reduce bullying in schools in large randomized controlled trial. A KiVa is a university owned program, but it is starting to migrate from the university in to a company.

Although all of these organizations are education facilities they don't compete in the same markets. All of them have a unique product that fits their selected markets and don't threat on each other. For Eduplus Ltd. there is a possibility in cooperation and even clientele among the universities and vocational schools. It is also a considerable boon for any educational product to have scientific research behind it, and getting one or more research facilities to take interest in Eduplus Ltd.'s products would be important.

#### 7.3.1. Goals

All of these organizations were looking for possible partners to start new ventures in Saudi-Arabia. They were also presenting their products, expertise and promoting themselves in

the exhibition. All of the organizations expressed that it was important to be seen not only by the Saudi officials but by other companies and organizations.

### 7.3.2. Brand relation with Finnish National Identity

The general attitude towards Finnish national identity was positive. They all agreed that Finnish brand should be better known, and that it was something that added to the value to the products of Finnish companies. Omnia and KiVa felt that the Finnish brand was especially important for educational and small companies. (Ollila, 2013) That said, KiVa and the Lappeenranta University of technology felt that for their particular needs the Finnish brand wasn't as important as their reputation as a research facilities. (Ruskovaara, 2013) Both have highly specialized products that rely heavily to having strong research background, so this was not surprising.

All answered that "made in Finland" meant quality, with KiVa adding Honesty and Punctuality. Omnia was not sure if the Finnish brand meant anything other to the foreign countries than Nokia. This is a valid question and was brought up many times during more idle conversations. Finland's most successful product has been in the field of mobile technology from Nokia to Angry birds, and this can easily eclipse the small education brands working to start exports. KiVa especially was concerned that the Finnish brand and that Finland was not well enough known compared to other countries with much greater national presence.

When asked about if Finland needed a better brand, everyone agreed that Finland needs a stronger national brand but their interpretation on what would be the best way to strengthen it differed. Omnia advocated making the educational exporting organizations tighter and working together. The representative of Omnia was very weary of governmental oversight and thought that it could be better if one of the companies took the lead in organizing the education export companies. (Järvinen, 2013) Lappeenranta University of Technology called for better quality products but didn't see working together as a unit feasible. KiVa thought that Finnish education companies should work together as a unit but be free enough to give room for individual movement. Both Lappeenranta University of technology and KiVa thought that the joint venture of Finnish education organizations should be coordinated by the government, differing from the views of Omnia.

When asked about the visibility of the Finnish brand in the IEFE 2013 exhibition, all agreed that there was room for improvement. The Finnish brand was not visible enough and the company side was not as well planned as the governmental side. Many of the props de-

signed to draw crowds to the Finnish stand, like big balloons with Finland written on them, were abandoned and the Company side of the booth was left to look very minimal. On top of that there were complications with the furniture that did not arrive until the fourth day of the exhibition.

## **8. Eduplus LTD and its position**

### **8.1. Eduplus Ltd**

Eduplus Ltd was founded by a team of game developers and a teacher in 2011 with the need for better quality learning games. Although there had been many learning games made in Finland in the past 20 years, they were often of questionable quality and were forgotten soon after their release. Especially the 3D learning environments like areas in Second Life were used as platforms for learning experiences and online teaching. These kind of learning environments were costly to maintain and were not used by students, mainly because of lack of understanding and communication between the makers of these platforms and end users. Eduplus Ltd. wanted to change this by making easily accessible games that were not expensive to keep online and that would be easily tested with real classes before release to make sure that they were enjoyable for the students.

Eduplus Ltd. starts the process by working out with the client what are some of the difficult subjects their teachers have problems teaching to the students. After that a team of professional game designers start to create a game that has value for the teacher as well as the student. The idea is to create a game the teacher can use as a tool to move knowledge from him or her to the student. All the games are custom designed to fit the specific problem and is tested many times with the teachers as well as the students. Every game is designed so that it makes the students work together in a social settings and increase communication between the students. The games also teach students 21<sup>st</sup> century skills like critical thinking, communication and collaboration, leadership and responsibility, civic literacy, taking initiative, self-direction and social and cross-cultural skills. These kind of behavioural skills are hard to teach in a normal class room situation, and although there has been much talk of need for these skills, there have not been many solutions for this problem. (Wagner, 2010)

The target market for Eduplus Ltd. is universities, schools and other educational organizations. These other organizations can be anything from Ministry of Education and culture to

private entities that are interested in providing schools with new tools. Especially in Finland the schools seldom finance their new investments and start bigger joint projects that get their funding elsewhere. This is because Finland has only public schools that are on a specified budget, and all acquisitions need to be budgeted accordingly. This makes the finding of new clients interesting, as the product is financed and used by people who are not making the buy decision. A successful sale needs to satisfy all participants in order to make a new sale possible. (Linnanen, 2013)

Going after foreign markets has been Eduplus Ltd.'s plan from the start, and IEFE 2013 was its first foreign exhibition. Saudi-Arabia was chosen because of the recommendation of the reports by Ministry of education and culture (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010) as well as University of Tampere. (Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulu, 2011) Also, Eduplus Ltd. joined Future Learning Finland at the right time to attend the fair, and it was heavily recommended by the FLF.

Eduplus Ltd. showcased a prototype of their newest game, Crosswinds, that was designed especially to be easily mouldable to the needs of other cultures. It is important to understand that every country has their own culture of education and what works in one country might not work in another. Any product that is brought to international markets has to be something that can be, if needed, changed to fit that country's culture.

## 8.2. Eduplus Ltd Brand

Eduplus Ltd. is a young company and that means that the biggest obstacle for Eduplus brand is its relative obscurity to the market. It has not yet had the kind of visibility it needs, and due to its small size it can't complement this by costly advertising. That said, there is a definitive and strong brand there.

### 8.2.1. Brand identity

- *Physical specifics*

Eduplus Ltd. is small company with only four fulltime workers. The employees are from ages 27 to 33, so the workforce is relatively young compared to many companies in the field. This plays well in to the "young and innovative" narrative, but comes with obvious drawbacks of perceived inexperience and obscurity to the market. Eduplus Ltd.'s products are also made with the accordance of the newest scientific findings as well as the newest HTML5 technology.

- *Personality*

Eduplus Ltd. is young and innovative. It burst with energy and enthusiasm and is interested in finding the best possible solution for the hardest possible problem.

- *Culture*

Eduplus Ltd. signifies a culture of cooperation and helpfulness that strives toward the mutual goal. It is achieved through empathy and caring.

- *Relationship*

Eduplus Ltd. helps with the teacher student relationship. It is there to give a teacher the needed tools to express and pass on knowledge and information and in the best of cases, even wisdom.

- *Reflection*

Eduplus Ltd. products are the newest tools for teachers to use in a classroom situation. They are the newest innovations in the field of implementable Pedagogy. The user of these tools is not only teaching with the best tools available but also using the computers and tablets of the school that have been lacking educational content.

- *Self-Image*

The user sees themselves as good teachers that understand how to use computers and tablets in classroom situations. The user also knows and understand what the students need, and uses that to pass knowledge on to them.

### 8.2.2. Brand position

To really makes sense of the brand landscape, two different types of tools are used to address this. Even though these tools have similarities they both look at the brand from a slightly different perspective.

#### 8.2.2.1. *Customer based brand equity*

- *Target market*

Eduplus Ltd.'s target markets are schools, universities and educational organizations. Because of the complex relations between the financing, clients and end users, the approach and target segment has to be research for each country separately. In Finland it has been very beneficial to know the clients and decision makers in the university segment who provide not only a clientele base but also research on the products. The clients have made a project that has included the products and services of Eduplus Ltd. that is financed by a third party. When approaching foreign countries though, Eduplus Ltd. needs to reassess its target



market. The structure of their culture may be very different from that of Finland which means that Eduplus Ltd. may need to contact the financiers or the schools directly. In Saudi-Arabia Tatweer and NCEL are in charge of the educational content of many of the schools. There are also many private schools that are financed by tuition that could be interested in what Eduplus Ltd. can offer.

- *Competition*

There is new competition born to this market all the time. Educational games are an emerging market and many small players in the field have seen the possibilities for success in it. Just in a year Eduplus Ltd. has seen many new companies emerging just in Finland alone. Dramaforum and 10Monkeys.com have their own distinct areas of expertise, but they still provide educational games.

Other source of competition is the bigger existing education companies like Pearson, Sanoma Group and Rovio. The market for educational games is not yet big enough to excite these big players, but they are interested and watching. These companies have the benefits of networks, experience in the education field and finance to back up their projects.

- *Points of parity*

Many of the new emerging educational game companies are creating completely new learning games. There is a search for new ideas and ways of implementing the familiar subjects in the class room.

- *Points of difference*

Eduplus Ltd. has a head start on company and clientele building when compared to many of the companies in Finland. At the same time some of the educational game companies like Dramaforum and 10Monkeys.com have been around longer than Eduplus with much older workforce and with that better contacts and networks. Their products though differ greatly from Eduplus Ltd.'s products, and are more traditional in their approach to educational games. 10Monkeys.com also is targeting broader markets than just schools and is providing their product to the consumer market as well.

The biggest difference is of course that Eduplus Ltd. makes custom made games for specific problems. Both Dramaforum and 10Monkeys.com have quite rigid platforms that cater to their existing products but might not be easily changeable for new tools.

#### 8.2.2.2. *Brand diamond*

- *Brand for what*

Eduplus Ltd.'s products are for better passing of information and ideas from teacher to student. Their competitive advantage is in the products being custom made to answer specific problems. Unlike many of the other educational game companies, Eduplus Ltd. have games on other subjects than just on mathematics.

- *Brand for whom*

As said, Eduplus Ltd.'s target market is Universities, schools and other education organizations. Depending on the structure of the educational institutions in a specific country, Eduplus Ltd. focuses on either the schools or the financing institutions.

- *Brand why*

Eduplus Ltd.'s products have been research by university researchers and thoroughly tested in schools before launch. They are made with teachers to best help them with difficult subjects. Each game is custom made for specific problems that the teacher has problem passing on to the students.

- *Against whom*

The competition is mainly addressed by newcomers and old players. Both have a different way of approaching the markets. Eduplus Ltd. has a head start on the new companies who are finding new ways of implementing games in education. At the same time Eduplus Ltd. provides something very different from the older players in the field by customizing their games to the specific needs of the teachers. Innovation and good relations with researchers will keep Eduplus Ltd. ahead of their competition until some of the big powerhouses of education start to take interest in the market.

### 8.3. Eduplus Ltd and the Finnish brand landscape

It is clear that Eduplus Ltd has a capable brand even though it is young and has not yet won much market share. When it comes to other brands, Eduplus Ltd. had a special position compared to other companies at IEFE 2013. Because Eduplus Ltd. creates custom made content for their clients, it can easily add value to the products and services of other companies. Eduplus Ltd. as a brand can be complementary and so many of those companies that were present at IEFE 2013 could be either future clients or partners.

When comparing Eduplus Ltd. and its products to those of their competition at IEFE 2013, there are some very distinct differences. Whereas Eduplus Ltd. has decided to customize

each game according to the needs and wants of their client, both 10monkeys.com and Dramaforum have decided to create a bigger platform. The upside of these kinds of platforms is cohesion of image as well as the possibilities for data mining. 10Monkeys.com uses its platform to gather up information that can be given back to the teacher and the data from their respective servers is used by both 10Monkeys.com and Dramaforum to improve their products. This kind of information can be invaluable for a teacher who wants to make sure that the students are doing their homework and to understand their progress. These kind of big platforms that create feedback have the downside of needing servers and having to be accessed online. Eduplus Ltd. has taken a different route with their products and that affects its brand. Where Eduplus Ltd. sacrifices information and maybe even cohesion, it gains agility, adaptability and cost efficiency. Because of the difference in both products and brands, there is room for cooperation and even joint venture between the education game companies. All of them are relatively small even though there is variation in funding and finance and all of them are trying to reach the international markets with very different skill sets and products.

Finnish companies like Rediteq and CBTec, which create learning platforms but do not create content, could very well be distributors for Eduplus Ltd.'s products. There is real possibility for synergy between Finnish platform and content providers, and Eduplus Ltd.'s are created to be light weight enough to be imbedded to existing platforms.

Eduplus Ltd. has a more diverse relationship with universities. They research the factual basis on the promises of Eduplus Ltd.'s products and legitimize the use of education games in classrooms. They also are clients that order educational games and are the main source of income for Eduplus Ltd. at this moment. So Universities are both the source of active research and a client for Eduplus Ltd. and so especially important especially in the Finnish markets. They are also important for Eduplus Ltd. from an image perspective, and it would be good to find foreign universities to do research about Eduplus Ltd.'s products.

Because Eduplus Ltd. provides content and not a platform, it has considerable freedom to move up and down the value chain and forming alliances with any party that is interested. This can lead to loss of direction if not managed well and might even hurt the brand by not attaching itself in to any specific niche. That said Eduplus Ltd. is quite free in creating cooperation's and joint ventures with multiple companies without stepping on anyone's toes.

Eduplus Ltd.'s brand touches upon many of the Finnish values and the valued attributed to "made in Finland." with specific care given to end quality of the products as well as the relationship with clients and other associates, Eduplus Ltd. tries to live up to as well as reinforce the image of "made in Finland." Many of the organizations called for unity within the education exporting community and it would make sense for Eduplus Ltd. to be part of that. With the products and services Eduplus Ltd. provides, it could complement the products and services of other companies. The Finnish education export companies, and especially Eduplus Ltd., are small and have hard time pushing through on their own. Together the education export companies could create something that would be both more comprehensive product as well as more comprehensive and cohesive message for the delegates of foreign countries.

## 9. Conclusion

Eduplus Ltd. has a solid and capable brand for a company of its size. Because the markets for educational games are so new, it is wise to keep the company as adaptable as possible even though it comes with the pitfalls of lacking a coherent message. Those companies that can create the most coherent and interesting brands and are capable of using all the tools to its advantage will be the future market successes of Finland. Eduplus Ltd.'s strengths can be found in the quality of their products as well as its position compared to the other Finnish export companies around it. There are few different types of organizations in the field of Finnish education exporting relative to Eduplus Ltd. that are of interest Universities and their research facilities provide the basic groundwork for any educational company. Well researched products and/or ideas are mandatory to get anything through to the schools or school systems, so Universities play an important role for Eduplus Ltd. In Finland, Universities also form the clientele base of Eduplus Ltd. and some of their products have already been researched, so Eduplus Ltd.'s relation with Finnish universities are already close. Fostering these relations and building new ones with education facilities is important, not only for Finnish markets but Foreign as well. Finnish universities are selling education products and services to foreign markets and have connections to foreign universities. Cooperation with Finnish universities in exporting or communication with universities of foreign countries could lead to new opportunities. Eduplus Ltd. would also benefit from finding a foreign university that would research their products, and this could be found from the connection of the Finnish universities.

Competition in the educational game market is fairly small mainly because of the size of the market. New companies are created now more than ever and most of those companies have very different views on how a successful educational game is made. Of the three different educational game companies present at IEFE 2013, all have a very different products and addresses the questions of education through digital means in very different ways. Both Dramaforum and 10Monkeys.com have bigger and more rigid platforms that can collect data and feed it back to the company or the teachers. They also have very coherent brands that are easily recognizable. Eduplus Ltd. has taken a different route and makes light weight games that have no real visual cohesion apart from the logo. This makes it possible for Eduplus Ltd. to make the kind of products they make and not be limited by the subject matter. This kind of diffusion in products and image could be an asset but could also be a liability, making the company too formless.

The differences in products and image are quite big between the companies, so much so that they may not even be competing in the same market segments. This leaves ample amount of room for cooperation and even joint venture between the companies. All of the three companies are small and starting exporting ventures is costly and time consuming. All of the companies were interested in cooperating when it comes to exporting efforts. Sharing contacts, information and exporting costs could help all of the education game companies and strengthen their position not only in Finland but abroad as well. At least among those interviewed in IEFE 2013, there seem to be consensus that Finnish education export companies should have more Cooperation than competition between each other.

To achieve a successful national brand that can encompass the new companies in to the international markets the different aspects of the Competitive identity have to work together. This cannot be faked by just marketing because it will backfire and seem like propaganda. There has to be something common between the companies, organizations and people that can be harnessed in to coherent competitive identity. This means that even competing companies have to have similar values if they want to take the full advantage of their countries brand. Finland is just taking its first steps in trying to manage its own brand and the basic pillars of the brand are still a bit hazy. Education business benefits from the PISA and Pearson studies that give its education system legitimacy and lends this reputation to the education companies coming from Finland. The education field also already has common values because the public school system is unified. This could be an advantage for the education export companies and makes it easier for them to create ties between each other. This should be strengthened by working together and using clusters like Future Learning Finland.

Although many of the organizations in IEFE 2013 expressed a desire to have someone else than the government to usher the education exporting companies, it seems to be at least right now in the best position to coordinate them. This gives the benefit of cohesive image that is in accordance with the other parts of Finnish brand building and also the government has the needed resources to manage the companies full time. At least for in the field of educational exporting the companies are too small to separate some employee from the normal day to day work in their company to coordinate a joint venture. It is possible, but improbable. For Eduplus Ltd. as well as other companies in the Education export business working together and leaning to the governmental initiatives like Future Learning Finland is the best way to get their voice out to the international market.

## 10. Appendix

### 10.1. Summary of Interview with schools

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | Omnia  | Lappeenranta University of Technology                           | Kiva Anti-bullying program                              |
| What does the company do?                                | Vocational institute                                       | University, Measurement tools for education                     | Anti-Bullying program, Building Safer environment       |
| Goals In Saudi-Arabia?                                   | Presenting expertise, Finding partnerships                 | Presenting products, Benchmarking, seeking market possibilities | Promoting Kiva, Finding a partner                       |
| With or without FLF?                                     | With FLF   | With FLF  | With FLF  |
| Is national brand Important?                             | Yes  | For educational sector really important                         | It is important but it is not well enough known         |
| What does "made in Finland" mean?                        | High quality, might only mean nokia                        | Quality   | Quality and honesty, Punctuality                        |
| Does Finland need a stronger brand?                      | For education yes  | For smaller companies yes                                       | Yes   |
| Is national brand important for education firms?         | Yes, and small firms should unite under it                 | Yes, but only at the moment                                     | Yes, not taking full advantage, uniting small companies |
| Is Finnish brand important for your organization?        | Yes  | Yes, but the quality of research in is more important to us     | Yes, but for us university background is more important |
| Separate Education branch or unified Finnish brand?      | Unified  | Unified when in country where Finland is relatively obscure     | Unified   |
| How to make Finnish brand stronger?                      | By working together  | Better quality, Finnish brand is already quite strong           |   |
| Should companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand? | Yes  | I don't think it would be feasible                              | Yes, but there should be room for individual movement   |
| Should it be coordinated by government?                  | Yes, but there could be other better options               | Yes, it is important when addressing certain countries          | Yes   |
| How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?           | Room for improvement                                       | Not visible enough  | Governmental side good, Company side bad                |
| How does your organization fit on the Finnish brand?     | Only vocational school that provided educational exporting | Part University part Company                                    | In the middle, Part university part company             |
| Is it important to use Education Clusters like FLF?      | Yes, but our biggest things are outside FLF                | Yes, contacts and selling help especially                       | Yes, but FLF could work more efficiently                |

## 10.2. Summary of interviews with companies

|  | Drama-forum   | Rediteq   |
|--|---|---|
| What does the company do?                                | Learning environment, 21th century skills             | Education management tools                          |
| Goals In Saudi-Arabia?                                   | Find contacts, Meet Finnish Companies                 | Representing, seeking possible clients              |
| With or without FLF?                                     | With FLF  | With FLF  |
| Is national brand Important?                             | For educational sector really important               | Not for us  |
| What does "made in Finland" mean?                        | Quality, Design                                       | Reliability, trust                                  |
| Does Finland need a stronger brand?                      | Yes   | Yes   |
| Is national brand important for education firms?         | Definitely  | Yes for educational content providers in particular |
| Is Finnish brand important for your organization?        | Yes, and we use it a lot                              | Finnish education should have a separate brand      |
| Separate Education branch or unified Finnish brand?      | Unified, Finnish companies are too small on their own | Unified   |
| How to make Finnish brand stronger?                      | Marketing and being bolder                            | No comment  |
| Should companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand? | Educational companies Should                          | Yes, but we could be better at it                   |
| Should it be coordinated by government?                  | Maybe, but someone other could too take the lead      | Yes, but not necessary                              |
| How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?           | Not visible enough                                    | In the news well, in the exhibition overshadowed    |
| How does your organization fit on the Finnish brand?     | Learning environment and platform provider            | In the later stages of educational systems          |
| Is it important to use Education Clusters like FLF?      | Yes, we are a small company                           | Yes, we are a small company                         |



### 10.3. Interview Omnia

Who are you?

I'm satu järvinen

- What organization do you work for?

I work for Omnia the joint authority of education and exporting industry.

- What does your organization do?

My organization is a vocational institute with 10 000 students. But the unit where I work for is the development unit of Omnia where we for example do education export.

- What are you doing here in Saudi-Arabia?

I'm telling about expertise areas in Omnia and building education partnerships with organizations here in Saudi Arabia.

- Are you here with Future Learning Finland or separately?

FLF.

- Is a national brand important?

Yes.

- What does "made in Finland" mean?

For education?

(Interviewer) In general, for example Germans use Made in Germany in the auto industry.

The Germans have done it very well in many fields. In Finland we have a way to go. I think made in Finland mostly means generally for Finnish people. We like to think it means something like high quality. But I would assume for most foreigners it might mean nokia. Hehe.

- Does Finland need a strong, or stronger, national brand?

For education? Yes.

- Is national brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

Well especially important. For education, yes. If you look at the organizations that take part on the Finnish education exporting we represent many different fields and sectors and players so to say. If we do this job by ourselves we give a rather fragmented image of finish education and that I don't see that supports great sales on in-

ternational level. I think we should more build Finnish educational products under the Finnish brand and sell those.

- Is Finnish Brand important for your company?

Yes.

- Should the Finnish education branch be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?

Brrrr... Maybe we should all work under the same brand. Under the same brand we can differentiate.

- How could the Finnish brand be stronger?

You could think right now the situation that we have in education exports the thing that would make the Finnish brand stronger just to start off with, would be that if we could understand that we would be stronger if we worked together.

- Should the Finnish companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand?

As a unit? Sure why not.

- Should the government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?

Well that's the thing. Well that is how in a sense it works at the moment. Funnily Matti Lassila asked me the same question. Sure we need a coordinator for educational exporting in Finland. The government might not be the worst choice to be the coordinator. Mostly we need a coordinator that knows how to do the job.

- How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?

Do you mean well and badly?

(Interviewer) Just in general.

Umm... I think the visibility was pretty good. We were able to show and get publicity and so forth. That was really excellent. I don't know how much of it was thanks to the Saudi hospitality. What otherwise comes to the exhibition and us it left room for improvement. Things usually do.

- Where does your company fit in on the Finnish brand?

We are one of the educational institutions school. We are actually the only vocational school that is actively doing education exports. We do teacher training like specific courses for teachers but also like promote vocational education and there is a huge demand for vocational education development in northern Africa and other countries.

- Is it important for you company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?

Yes and no. If future learning Finland would work better it would give more value. The biggest things we are doing come outside future learning Finland at the moment. Thank you for answering my questions. It is most certainly my pleasure.

#### 10.4. Interview Kiva

- Who are you?

I'm Juha Ollila from the University of Turku.

- What does your organization do?

I come from the anti-bullying program kiva. What we do is we are trying to with our program create a safer learning environment for students can go to school without being afraid of being bullied and victimized and we are trying to enhance same time the social and emotional skills of the students.

- What are you doing here in Saudi-Arabia?

I'm trying to promote kiva and find a good partner for helping us implementing kiva here. so basically we are trying to find a partner who we can sell our license rights to use our product as a license kind of deal, other than that I'm just amazed by the things that are going on here in Saudi Arabia but of course promoting kiva is why I'm here.

- Is your organization part of Future Learning Finland?

Well university of Turku is part of future learning Finland so I'm here with Future learning Finland.

- Is national Brand important?

Well it depends on what is the context. In some cases for example the people here in Saudi-Arabia people know that Finnish education is top of the world, but they don't know necessarily anything else. They know the fact that we have the best education in the world but they don't know anything else, so in a way...I. What is the question?

[Interviewer] Is national brand important?

in a way national brand is for example in this kind of event is of course important but what I have learned here even though we have a kind of a brand to be top country in education then that is pretty much it what the Saudis know about our grand education.

- What does “made in Finland” mean?

Well I think it is supposed to mean that you can count on the quality of the product and you can count on and if you order something from a Finnish company or university or any Finnish partners that are here that you get what you are promised to get. So quality and honesty and that is pretty much it.

- Does Finland need a strong, or stronger, National brand?

Well I don't see there wouldn't be any harm on that. Of course we are quite individual country, of course some things bring us together like ice hockey and that kind of stuff but other than that almost all the partners here for example they want to, even though we are represented here as a one national brand under future learning Finland, still it is obvious that everyone wants to point out that we are separate brands and separate universities, so in a way. In a larger way, we probably could be using the Finnish brand better that we are doing at the moment.

- Is national Brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

Well, ah. Even though we have the status as being one of the top countries in the educational field, I think we don't know how to actually get the full advantages at that. And there are so many small operators in the field so in a way I think there is a need for coherent brand and operator that brings all together. Like future learning Finland is in a way doing that, but of course there are ways to do that and better ways to do that. I'm not saying that future learning Finland. Of course in every case you can improve what you are doing.

- Is Finnish brand important for your company?

Well, Yes and no. The biggest thing that is important to kiva specially is that we are part of university and that we have a background of research and we have a background of academic evidence and secondly it is important that we come from Finland. Because of course

we are doing business in education and we can try to get as much out of the good reputation that Finland has. I think that that is not the most important thing. Most important thing is that we have are part of the university and that academic base is meaning more to us than the reality that we are coming from Finland.

- Should the Finnish education branch be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?

The idea of team Finland is something that is little bit different from the future learning Finland. I know that Future learning Finland is part of the team Finland but I think that even though we are putting all the partners and all the operators that are operating in the educational field in Finland if we put them together that is still quite small operator worldwide. So in a way I'm saying that of course we should use more of the whole idea and whole concept of Finland and Finnish brand instead of just educational brand. I mean we have even though Nokia is going down Nokia but is something everybody knows around the world and angry birds and clean nature and that kind of stuff and good welfare and social welfare and that kind of stuff is something that I think we should in a way try to attach to the brand of education as well.

#### 1. Should the Finnish companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand?

Well, in a way we are such a small operator that we probably it would be a good idea to have one major operator that could lead the way and then there would be an umbrella for the others there but as I said we are quite individual country. I think even though we are working under one umbrella or lead by one major operator or major partner there should be enough room for smaller partners to be independent and work individual as well.

- Should the Government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?

Why not? I mean I don't see anything wrong there. The government is helping other industries to go abroad and try to open businesses for other industries and areas of business and why not educational business as well.

- How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?

Well... hehe... about the two sections we have here. I think the governmental section is quite ok but I have to say that the section where all the universities and different companies are. It wasn't. It was quite lame to be honest and it was nothing I was expecting it to be. Half and half. The governmental side is quite ok but the other part I'm not satisfied at all.

#### 2. Where does your company fit in on the Finnish brand?

Well. We kind of, we kind of mingle there in the middle. We are part of the university and we are part of the educational market and we can take part of the PISA tests and all the good education the Finnish have achieved in an academic way. We have uh, kind of a business way to do or to find cooperation as well. I don't know. We are probably a little bit alone there in the middle because we have a strong relationship as a university but on the other hand we are trying to operate as a normal business as well.

15. Is it important for your company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?

Well I think there is, of course, we are such a small operator and we need someone to facilitate for example exhibitions like this. I mean if we would have to come here just kiva or just the university we probably wouldn't have been here. So in a way we need operators and facilitators like FLF the other question is that do we get enough value for our money. The way FLF is doing their work there is something that could be probably improved. So in a way we need, we are such a small maker or partner in the world wide business that we need someone to open the networks and facilitate the business meetings. But I don't know, I mean FLF is part of Finnpro which is just one consulting group in Finland even inside FLF we have competitors for Finnpro and I don't say that Finnpro is the only one. Of course there is benefit for Finnpro that it is part of the foreign ministry and ministry of education and ministry of employment. It is a government operator in a business world so in a way they have kind of monopoly at the moment.

.Yes, those were all the questions and thank you for participating.

Thank you.

#### 10.5. Interview Lappeenranta University of Technology

1. So let's start with the basics, who are you?

So my name is Elena Ruskovaara. And I'm here to represent Lappeenranta University of technology.

2. What does your company/organization do?

So it's a university. The products we have here are university based innovation measurement tools for entrepreneurship education.

.yea

The University itself it's a university of key faculty concerning technology and business.

3. What are you doing here in Saudi-Arabia?

So we... presenting. Well presenting the measurement tools for entrepreneurship education and trying to find out if here should be any possibilities to launch the tools also for Saudi-

Arabian markets. Meet people, bench mark our products and hopefully to get some customers. But to first of all find out what are the marketing possibilities to come here with some kind of product that has been established in Finland and products in European Union.

4. Are you here with Future learning Finland or separately?

We are here with Future Learning Finland. Our university is a member of this FLF concept. One of the core members of future learning Finland.

.now with the questions on the branding.

5. Is national brand important?

I think it is yes. Especially in that kind of event where Finland is one of the honored members. I've seen a lot of articles in newspapers in Arab news concerning this big fair, this big show, and how Finland is part of that. In that point of view yes it is. And on an educational side all these PISA and other results we have, the nice results, are something that strongly emphasizes or makes it easier to be a Finnish university or somebody from Finland or somebody concerning entrepreneurship or education or assessment or other aspects. So yes it is very important.

6. What does "made in Finland" mean?

Oh, to me? Quite a lot. The flag. I can see the flag on the product. It tells me that by buying something like that I may insure that the money comes back to Finland or staying in Finland. It means quality. Yeah, that's it.

7. Is national brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

I think it should become stronger and stronger. I'm not so sure that we have done all we could to make it as strong as possible. For example here in this fair or show the event here. It should become kind of polished to become even more eye-catching or more appealing to the foreign people.

.Should Finland in education makes a stronger brand?

Yeas why not. Made in Finland. Yes. It should be some kind of a brand in educational side also. That's something we've not had before. We have this future learning Finland and these teaching and learning results but the brand itself is not made in Finland.

8. Is national brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

Yes, at this very moment yes. But you never know what happens after the next PISA results, when they launch the next results. It might be that we are not the leaders there, hopefully we are, but there is always this possibility that some other country takes the first place. What if the results are not that good? So this is the moment.

9. Is Finnish brand important for your company?

For my organization? yes, I think it is. But about the branding in the university sector. I think it is more about quality of research and the amount of research the amount of students and

foreign students. All that kind of stuff more than being a Finnish university so to say. I don't mean that our university doesn't think Finnish is something that should give some extra value to this. But on university scale the it is more about these measurements that universities are measured by like quality of learning, research and so forth.

10. Should the Finnish education branch be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?

When Finns are coming to Saudi Arabia or some country that is quite far from Finland in quite many aspects. I think we should be Finn and have a brand so to say. and I think we have some action concerning that before we left Finland like we have this PowerPoint presentation that everybody will use in every meeting and to be honest with you I haven't seen that slide show here at all it is on my laptop and we have it on these laptops we have here but I haven't seen it used. It might be that I just haven't seen that but it also might be that it just haven't been really used. About the when we are herein Saudi-Arabia it is a Finnish brand. But I'm not so sure what we should be doing for example when going to Sweden. It is quite different story then. Then we should probably be more individual then. More companies and universities itself. But here especially in this kind of event Finland is the quest of honors so this is not our university or this company that is invited to come here but Finnish universities, companies and organizations.

11. How could the Finnish brand be stronger?

Oh easy question! Ha-ha. Well, I don't know how to answer that question. Well united we stand. It should be something that we all have the same story. And not just the story the actions we make or plan should be something we all agree with and I mean that we will do that and umm... quality is something that makes Finnish brand stronger and by quality I mean quality in product itself programs or systems somebody is selling here but also with the quality of meetings quality of messages and quality of communications and I think it goes to every level. So perhaps this kind of actions might make it stronger. I think there is no one answers to this question. I think we are quite strong already.

12. Should the Finnish companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand?

I think it would be quite useful way of doing and going international but um... I don't know how we could ever have that kind of control and even have so much time to go through each product pallet and see what we can do together and what are the benefits there and who should be doing something. But from customers point of view it would be quite easy to have everything on one set. But umm... I don't know how we could have that. It's a very noble idea. But I think it may not be feasible in reality.

13. Should the government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?



Yes. At least government should be one of the key cornerstones there. I think governmental level is one thing that is not the only level but uhhh... it depends on country, in some country you are more traditional thinking that everything should have some top down... and in that kind of context and countries you probably need a governmental support and governmental stamp on everything but I don't know how it goes worldwide. But with Saudi-Arabia I think this governmental protection and this official section on this the efforts the government so forth has made it very important for ministries and royal family.

14. How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?

Well we have this stand or pavilion, which has some elements from Finland, some pictures, videos, screen and dead reindeer furs. yes it is visible but maybe I expected a bit more, especially on that sense that when the stand the first or the last draft on what the pavilion would look like I thought it would be more unique like governmental and private companies are next to each other but something that had more than just a look of 15 actors so this is a bit like a platform and not like a Finnish brand. And actually I expected that this signs or this layers Finland the Finland text were up I thought it would be like high. and the I was told they were doing like balloons that wherever you go you can see the blue balloons of Finland text or something like that and then you just go there. And you can easily say to your customers or some contacts our booth is down there and you can see it from everywhere. I thought that was the idea and maybe that is, but maybe that is just my lack of knowledge and my height that I don't see that far or so forth. Of course there was this problem with the equipment and furniture but of course that happened on the first day. But now the situation has been changed but...

15. Where does your company fit on the Finnish brand?

Where? It is an organization, and university. We have a research based product. I think quite nicely, like one university should.

(Interviewer) So you see that your university works on more on the research side of the Finnish brand. So if you sectioned the companies inside the Finnish brand universities would be on research?

Yes or something in quite between. I think we have a strong product and which a product is provided by university but it could also be provided by company. But I think we are talking about evaluation, something that we can say that it comes from university and it's a research based product. It is not just made by a product but in an innovative way done in university I think it gives something extra for the product itself. But about the branding and how our university works in the brand. It is funny when I saw the wall here with our logo, but when you go to the other side of the wall there is this landscape of Saimaa Lake and some forest and so forth but there is a version of our logo which is not our logo.

16. Is it important for your company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?

Yes, I think it is useful. Niko and his coworkers have given a lot of information to us especially here before the event as well but really very important to have somebody who has been here who has some contacts who can say this is an important contact, go further with this contact. Some kind of insider is very important. I would like to concentrate researching and embedding these tools in Saudi Arabia. My training is not in international selling for example and having advices from them is quite important. For how to proceed for example. So it is very important.

Well that is all the question and thank you for taking the time and answering them.

Thank you, thank you martiska.

#### 10.6. Interview Rediteq

- Who are you?

My name is Miika Langille I'm a senior software developer at rediteq

2. What does your organization do?

We provide education management and team management tools for adult education and people in vocational training.

- What are you doing here in Saudi-Arabia?

I am representing our company. We are exploring the possibilities of providing our services to educational institutions over here.

- Are you here with Future learning Finland or separately?

I think we are part of FLF. Some sort of representative of that group as well.

- Is national brand important?

(Interviewer) For example, German auto industry uses the brand "made in Germany."

Not being a content provider I think that the Finnish brand for us is not so important. Finland is known for high technology and reliable services. So in that sense yes, but Finland is more known for high quality of education and that is not something we provide ourselves. We provide management software.

- What does "Made in Finland" mean?

I think it is more reliability. That what many people tend to associate it with. Reliability and trust. You get what you played for and you will get it.

- Does Finland need a strong, or stronger, National brand?

A stronger brand would help. Finland has a lot of small companies in particular so having some umbrella brand under which they could work under would help would be a big bonus.

- Is national brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

Yes. For education content providers in particular. National brand seems to be very important here.

- Is Finnish brand important for your company?

I think that Finnish education would benefit in working on its own. Separately from the national brand.

(Interviewer) For example we have team Finland that is the new initiative for Finnish companies. As a national brand. So should we take the content providers of education separately and use them as a...

I think so because there is enough evidence and research results in the educational sector to drive that brand forward than a national brand of country that is relatively obscure.

- Should the Finnish education brand be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?

Yes, I think so. Many people don't know where Finland is. And part of the problem is that Finland is seen as part of a group of countries, Scandinavian countries in general. So Finland would benefit a lot from sticking out more on individual basis.

- How could the Finnish brand be stronger?

That is way out of my league.

- Should the Finnish companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand?

Yes, I think... from What I've seen in the last couple of months I think that struck me in general could work better at. As I said earlier Finnish companies tend to be small and there is many small companies offering varied services and being here in Finland forming associations or corporations is still fairly new. The idea is that everyone does their own thing. And this could be improved by working in a group.

- Should the government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?

Sounds like a loaded question. It could be of use, but I think Finnish companies have the expertise to do it themselves if they so choose.

- How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?

Well uh, a lot of effort has been put in to the news articles. Very large spreads in the newspapers on Finland. That has been quite successful. In the exhibition itself Finland seems to disappear. Something went wrong. We were overshadowed by the stands of individual com-

panies, even though we are representing the whole country and are the special guest. For example the educational experts stand.

- Where does your company fit on the Finnish brand?

We fit not the highest stages but later stages of the educational systems. If we start from building of schools and providing education to teachers and staff providing content, we are at the other end of the scale with actual management software and IT solutions and services.

- Is it important for your company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?

For us it is very important. Again we are a small company and we don't have the resources to try do everything ourselves.

.Those is all the questions thank you for taking the time.

Thank you

#### 10.7. Interview Dramaforum

- Who are you?

I'm Hanna Rajatora I come from the drama forum I'm the business development director there.

- What company/organization do you work for?

Our company provides e learning environment called Petra's planet it's an environment where the students can learn those 21th century skills

- What are you doing here in Saudi-Arabia?

We are trying to find contacts here. Like, probably on the governmental level. We've had a lot of good meetings with some of the companies as well. Also we are to meet other Finnish companies that are here to do the same thing.

- Are you here with Future Learning Finland or separately?

With future learning Finland.

- Is a national brand important?

I think it is. It of course depends on the branch you are looking at but for example if you take the educational sector I think it is really important.

- What does "made in Finland" mean?

To me? To me it means quality. Nice design. Those are the first things that come to my mind.

- Does Finland need a strong, or stronger, National brand?

Yes they do.

- Is national brand especially important for Finnish education firms?

Definitely.

- Is Finnish Brand important for your company?

It is important. We have already used it a lot. Here in Saudi-Arabia and in UK when you tell the visitors that you come from Finland they think of you differently. They are really interested in the company if you can use the brand of Finland.

- Should the Finnish education branch be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?

The thing I'm searching for is the Finnish government launched the team Finland initiative so should all the Finnish companies be part of that or should the educational side be separate.

Umm... that is a good question. Thinking of how small Finland is I think it would be better if we all worked together. Thinking of the time window is quite narrow so we really need to act now to get our product and solutions selling all over the world.

- How could the Finnish brand be stronger?

Even stronger? Well I think there are a lot of good things in Finland that we can use to utilize, but the marketing haven't been as good as it could be. We really need some good quality marketing. And we could be much bolder than we are, if we compare ourselves to the US companies they are so bold and we are probably too shy and humble.

- Should the Finnish companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand

Well not all the companies. But I think all the educational companies should work together. We are such small companies even that we don't have the power to be proud. So I guess we really should commercialize our products and services more. So I really think we should.

- Should the Government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?

Well they could, but I don't see any reason why it couldn't be somebody else. Government has been taking that role now but anyways could do that as well.

- How is the Finnish brand visible in IEFE 2013?

Not so good I guess.

(Interviewer) Can you elaborate?

We should have some plaques and everything like more fancy stuff to trying to bring more people to have a chat with us and everything. So this is quite humble.

- Where does your company fit on the Finnish Brand?

Learning environment and platform provider probably.

- Is it important for your company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?

It is, because we are a very small company and I it is valuable help we can get from here.

#### 10.8. Interview Eduplus Ltd.

- Questions Eduplus Ltd
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- **Who are you?**
- Jere Linnanen, CEO of Eduplus Ltd.
- **Tell me about Eduplus Ltd.**
- Eduplus Ltd was founded in 2011 because we wanted to make better learning games than people were used to. We are still on the same path and want to expand from Finland to abroad.
- **What benefit does Eduplus provide?**
- We make custom learning games for our clients. It's quite unique what we do. Our client (for example, universities, schools or other organizations) can tell what problems they want people to understand better and we make a game surrounding those problems. We don't make a normal game with question cards and right/wrong answers. In our games the players need to work together in a social surrounding and apply knowledge within the game.
- **Why Eduplus? What are the special benefits?**
- We are specialized in new pedagogy and want to further the cause of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, cross-disciplinary thinking, information and media literacy, civic literacy, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, leadership and responsibility). Through our games it is possible for the teacher to help students learn these important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, which are normally so hard to teach in normal teaching arrangements.

- **What are your target markets?**
- Right now we have only Finnish customers. We are seeking possibilities in Europe and Middle East right now.
- **What do you have in common with your competition?**
- A desire to make learning games.
- **What is different between you and your competition?**
- Where other companies mainly focus on math games or edutainment, we want to push the limits of learning games further. We don't make learning games for parents to buy their children. We make learning games for school districts and teachers to buy for their pupils.
- **How do you see your competition?**
- There is more and more serious competition every month. Lots of people have had the same idea about learning games and more and more will have it soon. Right now we are ahead in pedagogy, but behind in getting to the markets and finding sufficient funding.
- **How do you see the Eduplus brand?**
- We have a pretty strong Finnish brand. Even though we are a company, we have built a school-friendly brand, and that allows us to collaborate more in depth with universities and schools. Public sector likes our "pedagogy first" - approach. Even though we have had a nice start, we have a lot of work to do expanding our brand to the markets and abroad. The good thing is that we now know who we are and what we want to do.
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- **What is the personality of Eduplus Ltd?**
- Eduplus Ltd started when I turned from being a teacher to being a CEO. The goal from the beginning was to help teachers do their jobs a little bit easier. I wanted to make tools that I would use myself.
- We have grown a lot but that basic philosophy still remains strong. We want to solve problems and work together with public and private sectors to do so. We choose collaboration over competition, because we believe that we have big common problems that we need to solve and too few people to solve them.
- If somebody were to label us a social enterprise (yhteiskunnallinen yritys).

- **What does Eduplus brand communicate to users of other brands?**
- I hope we communicate trust and commitment to solving the problems in our education. We are proud of our products and that people see quality when they see our logo.
- **What personal value does Eduplus Ltd bring to the buyer?**
- If we talk about digital markets, our goal is that when a teacher or a school district buys our applications, they will be able to teach new skills for their students better than usual. If we manage to help the teachers in their daily lives, it's possible for the new pedagogy to enter the schools more and more. This is a way for us to change the education to respond better to the world we live in.
- **The decision to go to Saudi-Arabia came from the Study made by Ministry of education and culture; do you feel that Saudi-Arabia is a good choice for Finnish companies?**
- Our experience was that Saudi-Arabia wasn't ready for our services. They are mainly building schools in Saudi-Arabia now, so we think that in a couple of years it could be a right time for them to buy e-learning content.
- **Why were you in Saudi-Arabia?**
- It was a chance to see if we could find new markets and possibilities in the Middle East. The best chance there was, really.
- **Were you part of Future learning Finland?**
- Yes.
- **What product did Eduplus Ltd show at IEFE 2013?**
- Crosswinds learning game. It's a game about mathematical thinking and problem solving, not just drill practices.
- **In general, is national brand important?**
- Yes, I consider it very important.
- **What does "Made in Finland" Mean to you?**
- I think it echoes trustworthiness and high quality.
- **Does Finland need a strong, or stronger, National brand?**



- We could expand our national brand even more, I think. It would enable small companies to already having a brand, when they try to go abroad, instead of each small company trying to build their own brand with time and money.
- **Is National Brand Especially important For Finnish education firms?**
- Yes, I think this is very true. We have had lots of great results in PISA and other studies, which help Finnish educational and e-learning companies abroad. It's really the background we are being evaluated.
- **Is Finnish Brand important for Eduplus Oy?**
- Yes, extremely. We think the high taxes as a "brand payment".
- **Should Finnish education Branch be branded separately or should all Finnish companies work under the same brand?**
- I don't have a strong opinion of this. We can work together in the same brand, but we need more high level representatives and campaigns to ease the way of the small companies trying to go abroad.
- **How could the Finnish brand be stronger?**
- How can any brand be stronger? We need a decisive marketing strategy and a big budget to pull it through. In order to do this, we need enough political will or it will come off half-assed.
- **Should the Finnish Companies work as a unit under the Finnish brand?**
- We would prefer this. There are 7 billion people in the world and only 5 million of us. There is enough to go around, and in the digital era we are also creating and expanding new markets, not just sharing them.
- **Should the government work as a coordinator when building a Finnish brand?**
- Coordinator is a strong word. We need government-level commitment and funding, but I think the companies should coordinate themselves with government support.
- **Where does your company fit on the Finnish brand?**
- Hopefully somewhere! :) We think we have good chances to be an example of exporting the Finnish educational success in form of learning games. We try to resonate trust and high quality - the same things I think the Finnish brand resonates.

- Is it important for your company to use clusters like Future Learning Finland?
- While Future Learning Finland is not perfect, it's the best we've got. And really, it's the sum of its members, so we each can work together to make something out of it. Future Learning Finland has been a way for a small company like us to meet bigger companies and get opportunities we wouldn't have gotten otherwise. Still, there is a lot of work to be done before Future Learning Finland comes all that it could be. First step would be for the government to fund it properly, and not back down from the ceremonial speeches and reports that envisioned educational export as the next big thing. Nothing happens without investments. We founded a company based on the promises and now when we are ready to go, there is much hesitance in the high level and uneasiness about funding. A company wouldn't launch a new frontier with grand promises and then fund 5% of it. I don't know why the government is doing it. One can only guess.

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